

Eaton Mill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110262
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	325120
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Keith Williams

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	305
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Williams
Headteacher	Mr Warren Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Saffron Street Bletchley MK2 3AH
Telephone number	01908 373621
Fax number	01908 367324

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The great majority of pupils at this larger than average school are of White British heritage. The remainder are from a wide range of backgrounds, the largest groups being those from Black or other White heritages. More pupils than usual are learning English as an additional language. An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much higher than in most schools. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The number in receipt of a statement of special educational needs is well below average. Above average proportions of pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual times. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage join the Reception class in the September after their fourth birthday. National Healthy School Status is among a number of national awards held by the school. The school has established a private limited company that provides before and after school clubs and a Nursery. This provision is inspected separately.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school provides an excellent education for its pupils. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive, one describing the school as 'in a league of its own'. A combination of outstanding teaching and leadership are at the heart of the school's success, and these are underpinned by a determination to provide the very best for each pupil. A very high priority is placed on promoting pupils' confidence and self-esteem, providing a very supportive and welcoming environment, and building a highly capable staff team. The school's success in meeting these aims means that standards are rising quickly and pupils make excellent progress in their all-round development.

The excellent headteacher and senior team monitor the school's work very closely and know exactly what is working well and what can improve. Successes are celebrated widely and areas for development are tackled robustly. Improvements to teaching and learning are the cornerstone of the school's considerable improvement since its last inspection. Staff have created a very lively, interesting and exciting place in which pupils can learn. The curriculum is well organised, innovative and is enriched by an excellent range of activities, in and out of lessons, that contribute considerably to pupils' enjoyment of school. Music and sport are given a high profile, and trips and visits out of school are many and varied. The strong emphasis on pupils' personal, social and health education means that they have a very well-developed understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They enjoy their time in school very much and appreciate their teachers' efforts to make learning fun. Pupils behave exceptionally well, are eager to learn, and lessons are invariably calm and purposeful. They respond very well to teachers' high expectations of them, although some of the work in pupils' books is presented untidily.

Staff keep a careful check on pupils' learning, assess their progress regularly and use the information they gather thoughtfully to ensure that they meet pupils' widely differing needs. More able and talented pupils rise to the extra challenges presented to them; pupils who find learning difficult, and those learning English as an additional language, are very well supported. Consequently, pupils achieve outstandingly well, whatever their capabilities, starting points or backgrounds. Senior staff use the robust and comprehensive range of information they gather about pupils' progress to set challenging targets and hold teachers to account. These records show that pupils' progress has accelerated and, in each year group, most are making rapid gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Standards are broadly average, although pupils currently in Year 6 are set to reach higher standards this year. While many of these pupils, and others across the school, had low starting points when they first started school, excellent links with the onsite, privately run Nursery are helping to ensure that more children have the expected skills when they join Reception. As a result, attainment on entry to Reception is rising.

The school's success in raising standards, improving teaching and learning and accelerating pupils' progress shows that it is very well placed to secure even more improvement. Pupils, staff and parents are rightly proud of the difference the school makes. This is best summed up in the words of one parent, who wrote, 'My child runs in every day, and hates the school holidays (weird!). I cannot talk highly enough of it'.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Outstanding planning, teaching and care ensure that children make an excellent start in Reception. Many children start school with skills well below those expected for their age. They make rapid progress and, by the time they enter Year 1, most have reached the goals expected of them. Children enjoy their time in Reception very much, listen with eager anticipation and have a thirst for learning. They make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Staff provide an exciting range of opportunities, and a good balance of activities led by an adult and those chosen by the children. A high priority is given to promoting speaking and listening so that, for example, children learning English as an additional language soon gain confidence and make brisk progress. Children of all abilities are supported very well. Outstanding use is made of the outdoor area to enable children to develop as confident and independent learners. For example, children loved working in the canteen, taking orders, reading the menus and paying for their food. Their learning is enriched by a variety of class visits. They particularly enjoyed visiting a local supermarket to see how bread is made and bringing back dough to make their own bread in the classroom, underlining their understanding of eating a balanced diet. The Early Years Foundation Stage is very well led and managed. There is a strong sense of teamwork among staff, who are always seeking to improve. Transition from the onsite Nursery is excellent and the close links made with families at that time are maintained through, for example, helpful home-school diaries.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' presentation of their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The school's success in raising standards is reflected in its improving performance in the national assessments for pupils in Years 2 and 6. In recent years, standards at Year 2 have been consistently exceptionally low. This year, provisional and, as yet, unpublished results for pupils currently in Year 2 show that standards have risen considerably and are broadly average. This represents excellent progress from pupils' starting points. There is a similar picture of improvement at Year 6. The national test results were well below average at the time of the last inspection. They rose significantly to average levels in 2007 and this was maintained in 2008, when science was above average. Taking account of pupils' starting points, these results represented excellent achievement, among the top 10% in the country. The provisional results for current pupils in Year 6 have improved further, and standards in mathematics and science are likely to be above average. Provisional value-added data show that these pupils have made even better progress than those of previous years. This strong performance is replicated across the school because teaching is of a consistently high quality.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils make excellent progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, because their personal development is given a very high priority. They respond very well to the many opportunities to reflect upon music, art and poetry, and have a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils contribute to their class and playground rules, report that they feel safe in school and

are confident they could turn to an adult if they had a problem. The school is very orderly because pupils behave exceptionally well. They are keen to please their teachers but, equally, they are self-disciplined and well motivated. Pupils make a very strong contribution to school life by acting as playground buddies, prefects or school councillors. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in the improving attendance rate. This is a direct consequence of the efforts of staff to make school an exciting place to be, a strong programme of incentives and the vigilant checking of absence. The number of persistent absentees has fallen considerably this year. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles, enjoy free fruit and salads and are very active at break times. Their excellent progress in basic skills ensures they are very well prepared for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupils benefit enormously from teaching that is consistently good and is often outstanding. Lessons are well planned. Teachers ensure that pupils understand what they are expected to learn and how they can judge their success. Their lively and interesting introductions and explanations capture pupils' interest and set the scene for the learning. Discipline is not an issue, because pupils are keen, interested and ready to learn. This means that teachers can concentrate, without interruption, on helping pupils to learn. They keep a close check on pupils' progress during the lesson, and they spot and tackle misunderstandings quickly and sensitively. Pupils say they like their teachers. This is clearly evident when watching them work and, indeed, very positive relationships underpin the learning in all lessons. Teachers provide high-quality, detailed feedback on how well pupils have done, and what they need to concentrate on next. Crucially, they give pupils time to consider how they need to respond to this guidance. This day-to-day assessment is used very effectively to ensure that the work planned meets pupils' widely differing needs and contributes to their excellent learning and progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The rich curriculum contributes to very strong personal and academic development. Excellent planning for literacy and numeracy contributes to pupils' rapid progress and rising standards. Information and communication technology is given a prominent place and often serves as a focal point for pupils' learning in a wide range of subjects. Pupils from Reception to Year 6 learn Spanish, and those observed during the inspection have commendable confidence in speaking the language. An excellent range of activities enriches the curriculum, including a wide variety of visits that help to emphasise cross-curricular links. The curriculum is adapted well to enable every child to succeed, and staff ensure that the particular requirements of different groups of children are met most effectively. For example, there is an excellent programme for the more able and talented pupils, supplemented by external visitors and visits, for example, to art galleries. Art, drama, music and sport all feature strongly during, and outside of, the school day and this contributes positively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's National Healthy School Status is a fitting reflection of the high priority placed on preparing pupils' for safe and healthy lives. The school has recently been commended by an external agency for its commitment to sport.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Staff are vigilant about pupils' health and safety, a point noted by a number of parents. Potential risks are assessed carefully and rigorous checks are made on the suitability of adults to work with children. Pupils report that bullying, or other harassment, is very rare and is dealt with swiftly should it occur. The school has close links with a number of outside agencies that contribute to pupils' strong sense of safe keeping. This is supplemented by very good teamwork among teaching and support staff. For example, those pupils who are potentially vulnerable, or need extra protection, are supported very well so that they can make the most of what the school offers. Pupils identified as having moderate learning difficulties are fully included in lessons and make excellent progress. Those at an early stage of learning English achieve very well because of the comprehensive support they receive. Staff have a detailed knowledge of the progress made by pupils of all abilities and they set achievable, but challenging, targets for each pupil. Coupled with high-quality marking, this means most pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they can do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The excellent headteacher provides very clear direction for all of the school's work that is firmly focused on being 'better than the best'. He has built a team of highly capable senior and middle leaders who know the school well and have a well-founded understanding of where provision can be improved. This is based on extensive systems to evaluate all aspects of the school's work. Pupils' progress is tracked methodically and the information gathered provides a very comprehensive overview of how well groups, classes and individual pupils are progressing. This is complemented by thorough checks made on the quality of teaching and learning. Governors support the school very effectively and play their strategic role very well, for example by providing a substantial long-term programme of refurbishment and classroom extension. Staff share the leadership team's vision for continued improvement; they work tirelessly to improve their practice and have high aspirations for their pupils. The school is highly inclusive, and is at the forefront of promoting local community cohesion. Beyond the local area, very well-established links with institutions around the world support this work and pupils benefit, for example, from regular visits made by overseas students.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

20 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eaton Mill Primary School, Bletchley, MK2 3AH

I am writing to thank you for the friendly way you welcomed us to your school recently, and to tell you what we found out. A special 'thank you' goes to those of you who met with us to give us your views. You gave us lots of helpful information.

Many of you told us how pleased you are with your school and you are right to be proud because it is outstanding. Your parents are very pleased with the school too. We were very impressed with what we found when we visited and there are many reasons why you are doing so well.

- Your headteacher, senior staff and governors lead the school extremely well. They know exactly what needs to be done to help your school become even better.
- Your teachers, teaching assistants and all the other adults who work in school do an excellent job. They make sure lessons are interesting and exciting, keep a close check on how well you are learning and make sure you know how you can improve.
- Last, but not least, you behave really well and try your best in everything you do.

All this means that you enjoy school very much and you are making excellent progress. Even though your school is outstanding, your headteacher, staff and governors want it to get even better, and they have lots of new and exciting plans. When we looked at your books, we could see that you try really hard. Your teachers give you challenging things to do and good tips for how to improve. We could also see that some of your work is rather untidy. We want you and your teachers to make sure your work is always set out as neatly as possible. We know that you will want to help.

We are delighted that you get off to such a flying start at Eaton Mill. Please keep working hard, because it is so important. We wish you good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

Keith Williams

Lead Inspector